THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

Acts 11:26 And the disciples were called Christ-
ians first at Antioch.

INTRO:-

The term "Xn" used in N.T. only three times

Acts 26:28
And Agrippa said unto Paul,
"With but little persuasion thou
wouldst fain make me a Christian."
1Pet:4:16 "but if a man suffer as a
Xn, let him not be ashamed."

Its origin and meaning

A. <u>The term "CHRISTIAN".</u>

I. <u>Its origin</u>.

1.The first followers of Jesus Christ did not call themselves Xns. but "the disciples", "the brethren", "the elect", "the saints", "believers" "the Way".

2.The Jews certainly never would have called them by that name.
"this sect" or "Nazarenes"

3.
3.It originated among the Gentiles at Antioch, and was used by them as a term of convenience and ~~reproach~~ and for a nickname.

Puritans, Methodists, Baptists
Eddyites. etc.

II. Its spread.

1. As indicated by the three references in N.T.

Acts 11:26 implies that believers in X were generally called Xns.

Acts 26:28 Agrippa was a Jewish ruler in Caesarea speaking before Roman officials- within 20 yrs of its first use at Antioch.

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1 Pet.1:4 a term used by Peter in a letter addressed to the elect of the Dispersion, a term familiar to them and identified with persecution.

Nero A.D. 64

2. From outside writers(Polycarp, Pliny, Tacitus and others) Xn a term familiar thruout the Roman world and in Roman courts.

III. Its meaning.

1. By the outside world
as a term of reproach, hatred, and fear
as a criminal.

2. By the church itself.
"The Annointed One" was X Himself.
"The annointed ones" were X's own , citizens of the K. of God.

3. Xns often miscalled Chrestians, from the miscalled founder, Chrestos
(gracious
gentle, kind

1 Pet.2:3 if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is (Chrestos) gracious.

IV. <u>Its historical significance</u>.

1. It marked the beginning of Xty as a religion separate and distinct from Judaism.

2. That Xty was a religion for the Gentiles.

3. That the church's center of gravity was shifting.- away from Jerusalem, at Antioch

4. That Xty was not the religion of a book or a dogma, of an idea or an institution, but that it was a faith centering in ~~the~~ a Person, the Person Jesus Christ.
Xty a religion of <u>faith</u>, <u>obedience</u>, and <u>love</u>.

Acts 11:26 And the Disciples were called Xns first in Antioch.

THEME:-The First Christians.

INTRO:- The origin ofthe name Christian.
To whom applied.
"Is your father a Xn?",a little boy was asked.
"Yes sir, but he has not worked much at it lately."

B.

I. The First Xns were Disciples--in the School of Christ.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."
The value of knowledge.
Hugh Miller after a raven's nest. Chlorite. Five years later a cragsman not knowing lost his life.

II. The First Xns were Believers. Examples of Faith.

Capt. Dodd sailing by the iland of Cuba.
Man overboard! Given the aid of a rope. When drawn up, could not let go the rope and the cords were imbedded in the flesh of his hands.
Christ must become imbedded in us.

III. The First Xns were Doers of the Word---in the service of X.

A child disturbed over her brothers' setting traps to catch birds. When asked what she did about it she said,
"I prayed that God would not let the traps catch the birds".
"Anything else?"
"I prayed that God would not let the birds go near the traps"
"Anything further?"
"I went out and kicked the traps all to pieces".

IV. The First Xns were Saints. Consecrated to the Lord.
"called to be saints", in nearly every greeting of Paul's.

Consecrated to the purpose of fighting with the sin of others, but their own.